Introduction

This book was written for *high-intermediate/advanced* learners of English. The topical content is suitable for *young adults and adults*. The language used in the lessons is very colloquial, intended to represent the linguistic expression of native speakers interacting socially in informal personal and professional contexts.

Each lesson features 10 idioms with emphasis on expressions that naturally occur in idiomatic discourse. As such, many of these idiomatic expressions are logical connectors that hold spoken and informal written discourse together.

The book is divided into 101 lessons, and each lesson has four sections on two facing pages.

Section A. The idioms are introduced in the context of an *idiomatic conversation*. Most of the conversations are informal and many are conversations between close friends or family members. These conversations are available on two CDs.

Section B. The same ten idioms are presented in a different format. Most of them are in the form of *written messages*. The idioms are gapped, requiring the learner to pay attention to the form of the idiom, referring to section A if necessary. The messages include emails, journal entries, notes, and memos. The language is informal.

Section C. This *matching exercise* increases the learning challenge. The idioms in the left column are matched with an entry in the right column that defines or otherwise gives meaning to the idiom. Note that the 10 entries are broken into two groups. The first four idioms and their meanings are the first group, and the last six form another group. The exercise is broken to keep the activity from being overwhelming. Brackets are used occasionally to provide explanation.

Section D. The learners are asked to *use the idioms by writing a sentence* in which they are substituting one of the idioms for an equivalent non-idiomatic phrase or sentence. The ten sentences follow the order in which the idioms are presented in Section A. Therefore, the learner working on sentence number one can refer to Section A and find the idiom that should be used to paraphrase the phrasing in sentence number one.

The answers to sections C and D are available on the Pro Lingua web site, along with a complete list of the idioms. www.ProLinguaAssociates.com

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Lesson 1 CONCERT



1A. Read.

Luis: What do you say we go to the concert tonight?

Carlos: Well, at the moment, I don't have any money.

Luis: It only costs ten bucks to get in. The drinks are what cost you an arm and a leg.

Carlos: I don't know if I'm up to facing hundreds of drunken college students.

Luis: Man, you really are in a real funk, aren't you?

Carlos: Well, I've been broke for a long time, and I still don't see light at the end of the tunnel.

Luis: Come on! It'll do you good to get your mind off your troubles.

Carlos: What the hell, why not.

Luis: And I'll pick up the tab.

Carlos: The way I feel, I hope you have a lot of money.

1B. Read and fill in the blanks.

Subject: Money
Date: Saturday, March 24
From: Carlos Gomez <cgomez @ supersend.net>
To: Pedro Gomez <Pedrog@ novanet.com>

Dear Pedro,

How are you? I'm OK, but at the moment I'm in a ____ , and I am ____ because of a big concert that I went to last night. The admission was only ten bucks, but I had to pay an ____ and a leg for drinks that I bought for a girl I met there. Then I played poker after, and lost a lot of money. I can't pay my rent and I'm behind in my school work, and right now I'm unable to do any serious studying. I can't see any light at the end of the ____ , so are you ____ to lending me a few hundred? What do ____ say? It would sure get my ____ off my problems if you could help me. If you can meet me down at the Blue Eagle Cafe with the money, I'll even ____ up the tab for our lunch (with your dough, of course)! But if I do get evicted, what ____ hell: I'll survive.

Love to Mama and Papa.

Carlos

1C. Matching Exercise. In the parentheses write the letter of the meaning for each idiom.

Idiom	*Meaning*
1) what do you say (c)	(a) ready and able to do something
2) be up to ()	(b) a lot of money
3) an arm and a leg ()	(c) (1) I suggest that. . . . (2) What's your answer?
4) at the moment ()	(d) right now
5) see light at the end of the tunnel (j)	(e) to forget about one's problems
6) be broke ()	(f) to pay someone else's bill
7) in a funk ()	(g) I don't care
8) get your mind off your troubles ()	(h) have no money
9) pick up the tab ()	(i) a sad or dejected state
10) what the hell ()	(j) to see or know that something bad, or unpleasant is ending.

1D. Change each of the following sentences with an idiom from 1C.

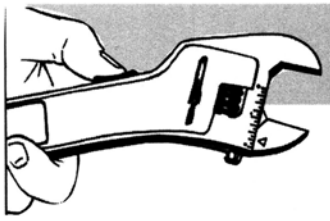
1) I suggest that we go for a swim. What do you say we go for a swim. _____
2) Right now I'm pretty busy. _____
3) My new computer cost me a lot of money. _____
4) I don't feel like climbing that hill. _____
5) Since his fight with Yuko he's been really sad and dejected. _____

6) I'm really without any money! _____
7) She's had health and money problems for a long time and still doesn't know if or when they'll end. _____

8) Come on to the party with us; it'll help you forget your problems. _____

9) I don't care. I'll try it. _____
10) We'll pay your bill. _____

Lesson 2



CAR MECHANIC

2A. Read.

Hal: Morning Pete; Hal here. My brakes don't work as well as they used to.

Pete: And you don't want to meet your maker in a fiery freeway crash because that so-called mechanic that you go to doesn't know his stuff, eh?

Hal: OK. I've seen the light. I'd have to have a screw loose to patronize him again. The last time I was there he set fire to his pants with a cutting torch.

Pete: I can put my finger on the main cause of your brake problem right now: that guy's stupid.

Hal: People that incompetent are, luckily, few and far between. I think I'll come back to you; you're expensive, but you're also a straight shooter.

2B. Read and fill in the blanks.

Journal Entry for 3/25

Our neighbor, the director of a medical clinic I ____ *to* go ____ *,* met her _____ *last week. She really* _____ her stuff *when it came to diagnosis. Sometimes she could* put her _____ on *a condition just by looking at my complexion and especially at my eyes. She did* have a few screws _____ *: once she threw kerosene on a charcoal barbecue she was tending and* ___ fire to *her wig. After I teased her for about an hour she* ____ the light *and agreed to buy a gas-fired barbecue. She was a* _____ shooter *and a warm friend. People like her are* few ____ far between.

2C. Matching Exercise. In the parentheses write the letter of the meaning for each idiom.

Idiom	*Meaning*
1) go to ()	(a) to be competent and efficient
2) used to ()	(b) to die
3) meet one's maker ()	(c) to visit or patronize regularly
4) know one's stuff ()	(d) did habitually in the past
5) few and far between ()	(e) to understand
6) have (got) a screw loose ()	(f) an honest person
7) straight shooter ()	(g) rare; uncommon
8) see the light ()	(h) to make something start to burn
9) set fire to ()	(i) to be eccentric, or a little crazy
10) put one's finger on ()	(j) to assess or perceive correctly

2D. Change each of the following sentences with an idiom from 2C.

1) I once worked in New York City. _____

2) Old Uncle Fudd died last week. _____

3) My boyfriend visits a chiropractor for a back problem. _____

4) My sister's a computer technician; she's really good at her job. _____

5) I told my brother he'd have to work hard in college. At last he understood and began to study hard. _____

6) My neighbor talks to his tomato plants. He's very strange. _____

7) The children who burned the garage down were playing with matches. _____

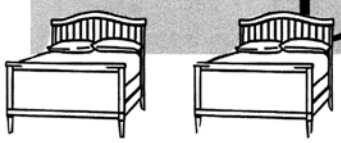
8) That mechanic can usually spot the problem's cause in five minutes. _____

9) Honest politicians are pretty rare in this country. _____

10) We urgently need an honest, intelligent person for our national leader. _____

Lesson 3

DORMITORY LIFE



3A. Read.

Roger: Last night I couldn't study at all.

Jack: Let me guess. Your loudmouth roommate couldn't stop talking.

Roger: Jack, what's with that loudmouth, anyway? He's a real pain in the butt.

Jack : I'm guessing he was hot stuff in high school and threw his weight around there. Kids like that always seem to have the habit of running off at the mouth.

Roger: Dorm life here might get to be a bit much.

Jack : Yeah. I haven't made up my mind whether I'll stay here or look for a furnished room in town.

Roger: Well, a room of your own would be a damn sight quieter.

3B. Read and fill in the blanks.

My dear Gisela,

I've heard nothing at ___ from you for two weeks. What's ___ us? Please write or call.

Anyway, my new boss is a real ___ in the butt. He seems quite insecure and actually shouts out orders, apparently to let everyone know that he's ___ stuff and throws his ___ around. And he's always running ___ at the mouth and saying nothing. It's pitiful; I haven't made up my ___ whether to stay or look for a new job.

This place is getting to be a bit ___ ; I'd sure like to have a small business of my ___ .

And I'd feel a damn ___ better if I heard from you.

Love always,

Your Roger

3C. Matching Exercise. In the parentheses write the letter of the meaning for each idiom.

Idiom	*Meaning*
1) what's with ()	(a) an important person
2) hot stuff ()	(b) an annoying person or thing
3) pain in the butt [coarse] ()	(c) in any respect; to any extent
4) at all ()	(d) tell me about, or explain
5) a bit much ()	(e) almost too [much]
6) run off at the mouth ()	(f) belonging to no one else
7) make up one's mind ()	(g) a lot; much (in extent or degree)
8) throw one's weight around ()	(h) to decide
9) of one's own ()	(i) to talk too much
10) a damn sight [informal] ()	(j) to act like the boss

3D. Change each of the following sentences with an idiom from 3C.

1) I really don't like broccoli! _____
2) Why does she look so sad? What's happened to her? _____

3) That guy's a nuisance: he always wants to borrow tools from me. _____

4) She walks around campus like she's really important. _____

5) My three-year-old sister runs things in our house. _____

6) My brother-in-law loves to talk a lot about things he knows nothing about. _____

7) The politician's "sincerity" was a little overdone. _____

8) She's finding it hard to decide about that job offer. _____

9) I'd sure like a bedroom that was mine alone. _____

10. With the new paint job, it looks a lot better than it did. _____
